

MELROSE

Two persons honored as top grandparents

■ Two people, Julia Elisa Joseph and Ernesto Soto, were honored during the observance of Grandparents Day.

Miami Herald Staff Report

The Team Metro Melrose staff celebrated Grandparents Day on Sept. 10 by recognizing a grandmother and a grandfather from the community.



SOTO

Julia Elisa Joseph and Ernesto Soto were chosen as the grandmother and grandfather to honor.

Joseph, 44, mother of four, has two granddaughters, Genesis Marie, 3, and Julie Marie, 2. She recently received custody of the girls and has been raising them alone for the past two years.

The native of Colombia arrived in New York City in 1968 and moved her family to the Miami area in 1980. She believes in the importance of family and has made a lot of sacrifices to provide a healthy and wholesome environment for her grandchildren.

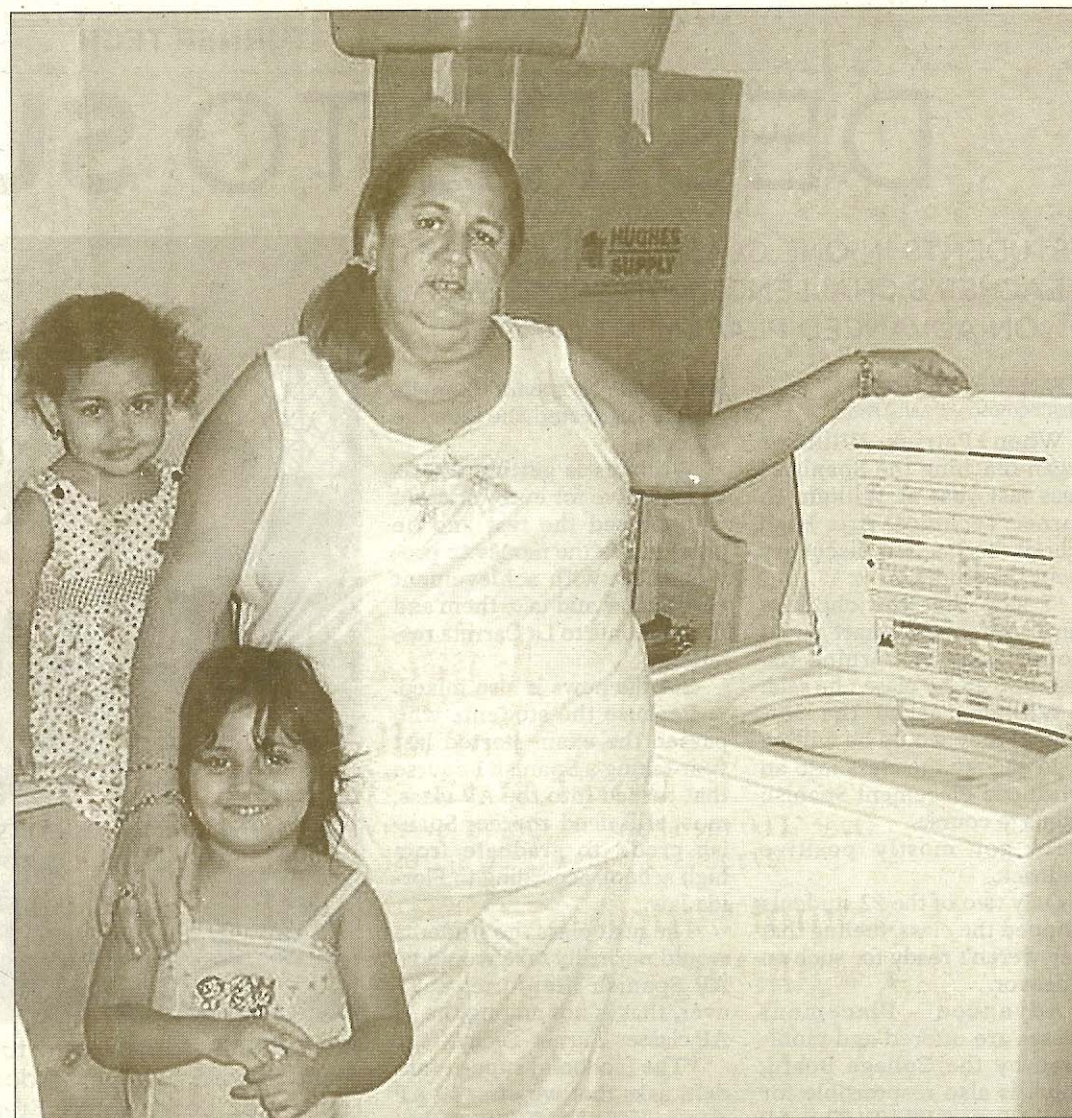
Soto, 74, who was a singer

in his native Cuba, continued as an entertainer in the United States after he came with his family in 1971. He has three sons and three daughters and is grandfather of 10 children ages 15 months to 25 years, including five boys, three girls and a set of twins: a boy and a girl.

Soto has since retired and now dedicates himself to his family and to serving the community. He has been living in Melrose 14 years and works tirelessly to clean and beautify the community. He can often be seen along Northwest 30th Avenue picking up debris or mowing the grass.

For being recognized, Joseph got a washing machine, courtesy of local businessman Mark Kram of All Florida Scrap Metal. Soto got a Home Depot gift card that he will use to buy a grass trimmer.

Joseph and Soto are among some 70 million grandparents in the United States and the number will continue to grow as baby boomers age. According to Team Metro Melrose, about 67 percent of Americans age 45 and older are grandparents and assist parents, pay for homes and meet the pressures of finances, family and jobs.



GRANDMOTHER: Julia Elisa Joseph has custody of two of her granddaughters, Julie Marie, 2, and Genesis Marie, 3. Joseph received a new washer for being honored Sept. 10 on Grandparents Day.

The history of Grandparents Day began with Marian McQuade, a housewife in Fayette County, W.Va., who, in the 1970s, campaigned for such an occasion as a way of championing the cause of the

lonely and elderly in nursing homes. She hoped to persuade grandchildren to tap the wisdom and heritage their grandparents could provide.

As a result of McQuade's campaign, President Jimmy

Carter in 1978 proclaimed that National Grandparents Day would be celebrated every year the first Sunday after Labor Day.